

NSC BRIEFING

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19 January 1955

COSTA RICAN REVOLT

- I. Apparent failure Costa Rican revolt clearly in US interest--NOT because of merits or demerits governments concerned, but because successful repetition "Guatemala-type" coup would be dangerous precedent.
- II. As to specifics in Costa Rica -
 - A. Only rebel area left is in extreme northwest.
 - 1. 500 men in area of La Cruz.
 - B. Government moving against these, with 1,400 troops (from town of Liberia northward some 30 miles).
 - 1. Government announced (18 Jan) rebels pushed back north of Santa Rosa.
 - 2. Government hopes cut rebel escape route north of La Cruz.

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C. Rebel "air force" collapsing.

1. Transport (C-47), piloted by American Jerry Delarm, destroyed in crash landing.
2. Two AT-6's returned to Nicaragua, spotted by OAS observers, after which President Somoza sheepishly "interned" them.
3. Fighter (F-47) has disappeared--believed back in Guatemala.
4. Thus, little threat further rebel air action.

III. Internal support for rebels didn't develop.

A. Majority Costa Ricans have no love for former presidents Calderon Guardia and Picado (in whose names rebels acting), due their:

1. Alliance Communists '44-48.
2. Close association Somoza since '48.
3. Dictatorial tendencies.

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B. Costa Ricans generally support government.

1. Even followers of Ulate (opposition leader, ex-president) volunteered fight "invaders."

2. Ulate, like Figueres, old enemy Calderon/Picado.

C. No defections reported from Civil Guard, which led by men loyal to Figueres.

IV. Revolt's end does not mean end bad blood between Costa Rica and neighbors.

A. Nicaraguan, Venezuelan leaders still determined eliminate Figueres. May now try assassination.

B. Somoza of Nicaragua himself a target for assassins. Opposition (Conservative Party) allegedly plotting against him-- Figueres would be happy to help Nicaraguan plotters.

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- V. Prompt action has raised OAS prestige, although Latin "dictators" resent what they consider US "intervention."
 - A. Venezuela, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic may claim action was interference.
 - B. However, others--notably Uruguay, Ecuador--and "liberal-democratic" opinion throughout hemisphere will support OAS action.

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